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REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 36-69, including independent claims 36, 53, 61, and 69, are pending in the present application. Independent claim 36, for instance, is directed to a process that comprises providing a superabsorbent material capable of absorbing at least about 20 grams of an aqueous solution per gram of the superabsorbent material. A paper web is formed from a cellulosic fibrous material and the superabsorbent material, wherein the superabsorbent material comprises from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight of the paper web. The paper web is at least partially dried. The paper web is incorporated into a tissue product, wherein the tissue product is formed primarily from the paper web and optionally one or more additional paper webs. The tissue product has a basis weight less than about 100 grams per square meter.

In the Office Action, original independent claims 1, 18, 24, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,651,862 to Anderson, et al. Anderson, et al. is directed to an absorbent, wet-formed composite that comprises a combination of fibers and absorbent material. The absorbent material is desirably swellable in the absorbent medium. The composite is suitable for use in products such as diapers, feminine care products, adult incontinence products, wound dressings, training pants, wipes, and mats. (Col 1, lines 11-13). When the absorbent composite is employed in diapers, for instance, the composites are suitably sandwiched between a liquid-pervious bodyside liner and a liquid-impervious outer cover. (Col 10, lines 21-29).

However, Anderson, et al. fails to disclose various limitations of independent claims 36, 53, 61, and 69. For example, these independent claims each require the formation of a "tissue product", such as bath tissue, bath tissue, paper towels, and so forth. (See e.g., Appl. p. 5, ll. 18-28). Tissue products differ in many respects from the absorbent products formed according to Anderson, et al. For instance, as reflected by the current independent claims, "tissue products" are relatively lightweight and are formed primarily from paper webs to provide optimum absorbency. To the contrary, the absorbent products contemplated by Anderson, et al. are generally of a higher basis weight and contain additional components not typically included in tissue products, such as fluid-impervious liners.

In addition, independent claims 36 and 61 also require that the superabsorbent material comprise from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight of the paper web, while independent claims 53 and 69 require that the superabsorbent material comprise from about 0.1% to about 3% by weight of the paper web. The present inventors discovered that even minute amounts of a superabsorbent material can significantly improve the absorbent capacity of the tissue product when utilized in accordance with the present invention. For example, a superabsorbent material present in an amount of only about 1% by weight can increase the absorbent capacity of the tissue by about 15%. (Appl. p. 7, ll. 13-25).

To the contrary, Anderson, et al. states that the absorbent material is present in the composite in an amount of from 5% to 95%, desirably from about 35% to about 95%, preferably from about 60% to about 95%, and most preferably, from about 70% to about 90%. (Col 5, lines 18-23). Such a high level of absorbent material is particularly

significant when considered in conjunction with the differences in products contemplated by Anderson, et al. and the present claims. Specifically, such a high level of superabsorbent would likely have an adverse affect on the integrity and strength of a "tissue product" that is formed primarily from one or more paper webs and has a basis weight of less than about 100 grams per square meter, as required by the present claims. Anderson, et al. simply fails to disclose the combined features of a superabsorbent material in an amount of from about 0.1% to about 5% by weight of a paper web that is incorporated into a tissue product formed primarily from one or more paper webs and having a basis weight of less than about 100 grams per square meter. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 36, 53, 61, and 69 patentably define over Anderson, et al.

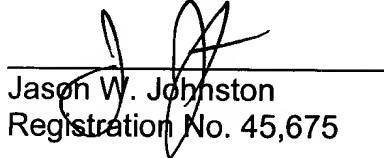
In summary, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims patentably define over all of the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. As such, it is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Halpern is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this response.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Appl. No. 09/643,979  
Amdt. Dated May 19, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of Feb. 26, 2003



Respectfully requested,  
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Date: 5/19/03